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Notes on the distribution of some Alabama plants

ROLAND M. HARPER

From November, 1905, to July, 1906, I was doing botanical field work for the Geological Survey of Alabama, and in the course of my travels over the state, which took me into nearly every county, I found many plants in unexpected places. Some of those discussed below have not been reported from Alabama before, but few are mentioned for that reason alone. The mere fact of extending the known range of a species a short distance across some political boundary or parallel of latitude, in a region where botanists are as scarce as they are in Alabama, is not ordinarily of sufficient importance to justify publishing it, but if at the same time some new light is thrown on the laws of distribution, then the case may be different. Several of the following species are here reported for the first time from natural regions which they were not previously known to occupy, which will necessitate more or less readjustment of existing theories of their distribution. Some notes of this kind from the northern part of the state, mentioning two species new to Alabama, were published in Torreya for June, 1906.

ANCHISTEA VIRGINICA (L.) Presl (*Woodwardia* J. E. Smith)

Hitherto this has been known only in the glaciated region and coastal plain of the Eastern United States,* but last spring I found it in damp woods in the Coosa valley near Center, in Cherokee County, and in the metamorphic (eastern) part of Chilton County, a few miles from the same river. Although the finer details of geological history in the southeastern states are still very imperfectly known, there are several reasons for believing that much of the country adjacent to the Coosa River throughout its length was submerged beneath the sea during the Tertiary period, or later, and the vegetation of this area must therefore be much newer than that of most of the Metamorphic and Palaeozoic terranes.

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* See Rhodora 7 : 71. 1905.

PINUS SEROTINA Michx.

In Georgia this pine can be found almost anywhere in the coastal plain except in the lime-sink region, but the only previous record of its occurrence in Alabama which I have come across is on page 192 of Mohr's Plant Life, where it is cited as the host of a fungus collected in Lee County by Professor Atkinson. (And even this is an error, according to Arthur and Kern.)* Last winter I found this tree in Chilton County near Thorsby, in Autauga between Prattville and Booth (these two localities being in the region of the Tuscaloosa formation, corresponding approximately with the fall-line sand-hills of Georgia and the Carolinas), in the southeastern corner of Dale, and at several places in Houston, Geneva and Covington (the last three counties being in the pine-barren region, along the southern border of the state). There can be little doubt that it will eventually turn up in many other places in the southeastern quarter of the State. Just what keeps it from extending farther west I am unable to say.

In the last chapter of the revised edition of Mohr's Timber Pines of the Southern United States (1897) is an excellent summary of the known distribution of this species up to that time, by Dr. F. Roth.

TSUGA CANADENSIS (L.) Carr.

Geographical names are sometimes of considerable assistance in discovering little known geological, botanical or historical facts. The name "spruce pine" is applied by the natives to several different coniferous trees in the South, but in the mountains it usually means either *Tsuga canadensis* or *Pinus virginiana*. On March 30 last I happened to be passing through the village of Spruce Pine, in Franklin County, and not seeing any of the latter species in the vicinity, and being out of the known range of *Tsuga*, I inquired as to the origin of the name, and was told that it was derived from a tree similarly named, more rarely called hemlock, which grew wild near by, some of it being within a mile to the westward. Having about an hour to spare before train-time, I hastened in the direction indicated, following down a branch † which headed near the station, and after going a little over a mile found a group of four trees on the steep bank of the branch. On my return to the station with the desired specimens I was told further that the species extends down the same stream about twenty miles (which would bring it almost to the Mississippi line), and that some of the specimens are three or four feet in diameter.

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* Bull. Torrey Club 33: 415. August, 1906.

† See Ann. N. Y. Acad. Sci. 17: 24 (footnote). 1906.

Tsuga canadensis is known from only two other counties in Alabama, namely, Winston, where it was found by Judge Peters and Dr. Mohr,* and Jackson, where Mr. Harbison reported it a few years ago.† All of the Alabama stations are on the sandstone rocks of the Coal Measures, and not far from 1,000 feet above sea-level.

TAXODIUM DISTICHUM (L.) Rich.

It was quite a surprise to find this tree growing on granite rocks along and in the shoals of the Tallapoosa River for a mile or two above the fall-line at Tallassee, amid typical Piedmont region scenery, with not a trace of any coastal plain deposits in sight; for it is almost confined to the coastal plain, and to calcareous formations. I measured one specimen 33 inches in diameter above the enlarged base. With it were several other species of somewhat similar distribution, but I did not have time to ascertain how far up the river any of them extended. To explain their occurrence there will require a knowledge of some details of geological history which are as yet unwritten; but the plants themselves may be expected to furnish important clues when the laws of their distribution are better understood.

SCIRPUS CARINATUS (H. & A.) Gray

Dr. Mohr knew of no definite Alabama station for this species, but last spring I found it to be a common weed along damp roadsides, etc., in or near Tuscaloosa, Auburn, Tuskegee, Prattville, Elmore, Clanton and Maplesville. It flowers in April, and is probably more difficult to recognize at other seasons of the year. It is evidently introduced, and its natural range is yet to be determined.

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* See his remarks on this species on pages 34 and 72 of his Plant Life of Alabama.

† Biltmore Bot. Stud. 1: 154. 1902.

SCIRPUS GEORGIANUS Harper, Bull. Torrey Club 27: 331. *pl. 22.* 1900

Quite abundant in a marshy place near Wellington, Calhoun County (in the Palaeozoic region), May 17, in flower. Previously known only from two or three places in Middle Georgia.* During the same month I saw from trains in Tuscaloosa and one or two other counties what is probably the same species, though some of it may have been *S. atrovirens* Muhl., which is likewise unrecorded from Alabama.

RYNCHOSPORA SEMIPLUMOSA Gray

As this species was originally described from Louisiana and is common in the pine-barrens of Georgia, it was to be expected in Alabama. In June I found it in moist pine-barrens within a few miles of Geneva and Andalusia.

CAREX PICTA Steud.

This has always had the reputation of being rare, but probably chiefly because it flowers in March, when not many botanists are stirring in the regions where it grows. Last spring I found it in six counties, namely, Lauderdale, Colbert, Marshall, Blount, Walker and Fayette. Dr. Mohr knew it only from Winston. Its usual habitat is on shaded bluffs of the Coal Measures and other non-calcareous Carboniferous strata.

RHAPIDOPHYLLUM HYSTRIX (Pursh) Wendl. & Drude

This has been known to Alabama botanists from only one station, in the vicinity of Auburn. On a visit to Evergreen, in Conecuh County, last December, I found that it forms an important asset of the shippers of Christmas decorations at that place,† so I instituted a search for it in the vicinity, and found it at two places a few miles apart. On a remote and almost inaccessible island in a creek swamp, which the evergreen hunters must have so far overlooked, were many fine specimens. In June I saw a few leaves being carried in a buggy which I met a few miles from Greenville, in the next county above, but I did not learn where they were gathered. It is rather unfortunate that this species should be in demand for decorative purposes, for it is the rarest palm in the Eastern United States outside of subtropical Florida, and it is liable to be exterminated from some places before the laws of its distribution can be fully worked out.

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* See Bull. Torrey Club **28**: 466. 1901. — Later. Mr. Fernald (in Rhodora **8**: 163–164. 1906) has just announced a much wider distribution for it.

† See Country Life in America **7**: 171–176. Dec., 1904. The palms in the picture in the lower left-hand corner of the first page are *Rhapidophyllum*.

Dryopteris floridana, which likewise has been reported in Alabama only from the vicinity of Auburn, is also shipped from Evergreen for the same purpose, but I did not succeed in finding any of it growing.

ERIOCAULON LINEARE Small

On May 15th a few specimens were noted in a boggy place in the Coosa valley about two miles from Center, in Cherokee County, together with *Anchistea virginica* and several other species rarely seen outside of the coastal plain. It was previously known only from the pine-barrens of Georgia.*

LUZULA SALTUENSIS Fernald

(*Juncoides pilosum* of other recent American authors)

This has much the same habitat as *Carex picta*, and flowers at the same time. I noted it last spring in Lauderdale, Colbert, Fayette, Tuscaloosa, Cleburne and Chilton Counties, all in the upper half of the state, in the Palaeozoic and Metamorphic regions. It is not mentioned in Mohr's Plant Life or in Earle's Flora of the Metamorphic Region of Alabama.†

TILLANDSIA USNEOIDES L.

Professor Earle ‡ reported this as having been all killed in the Metamorphic region of Alabama by the freeze of February, 1899; but I was gratified to find last April that his estimate of the damage was somewhat exaggerated. There is a good deal of this plant growing on trees among the granite cliffs along the Tallapoosa River near Tallassee (the same locality mentioned above in connection with *Taxodium distichum*). Many of the specimens observed there and in the neighboring Cretaceous region are dead, however, and it is probable that those now living came from seeds which managed to survive the freeze.

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* See Bull. Torrey Club **32**: 461–463. 1905.

† For notes on its occurrence in Georgia see Bull. Torrey Club **27**: 324, 325. 1900; **32**: 154, 452. 1905.

‡ Bull. Ala. Agric. Exp. Sta. **119**: 63. 1902.

The occurrence of this species there at all was somewhat of a surprise, for it is almost confined to the coastal plain, barely entering the Metamorphic region for a couple of miles at its extreme southern edge in Georgia and Alabama, about latitude 32° 30′. Just why the inland edge of the range of an epiphyte should so nearly coincide with a geological boundary is an unsolved problem. It is significant in this connection that it shows a decided preference for trees growing in calcareous soil (as was noted by Dr. Hilgard in Mississippi in 1860 and by Dr. Smith in Alabama in 1894); but the reason for this is equally obscure.

UVULARIA FLORIDANA Chapm.

Collected in the bottoms of Catoma Creek about five miles southwest of Montgomery, April 23, 1906. This species is not mentioned by Dr. Mohr, but there is a specimen in the Torrey Herbarium collected by Buckley in May, 1841, in Alabama, locality not specified, but presumably in Wilcox County, like most of Buckley's other Alabama plants.*

MYRICA CAROLINENSIS Mill.

In habitat and distribution this is very similar to *Anchistea virginica*, already mentioned.† In Alabama I have noted it in eight coastal plain counties, also in sandy bogs in Marshall (on Sand Mountain), Cherokee (Coosa valley), Clay, Chilton and Tuscaloosa counties, in the older parts of the state. The specimens at these places, however, are very small, being scarcely more than knee-high.

The explanation suggested for the occurrence of *Anchistea* outside of the coastal plain will not apply so well to this case, for the Marshall and Clay County stations at least have in all probability been dry land since a time antedating the appearance of all species of dicotyledons now living.

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* See Mohr, Contr. U. S. Nat. Herb. **6**: 16. 1901.

† See also Rhodora **7**: 74. 1905.

It now seems as if practically all the bog plants common to the glaciated region and coastal plain can be found in at least a few places in the older regions between, and perhaps they were all once more widely distributed there, and are being gradually crowded out into the newer regions by the climax vegetation.*

QUERCUS LAURIFOLIA Michx.

Until this year this too was known only from the coastal plain, but during the spring I found it quite abundant along the Coosa River in Chilton and Coosa counties, in the Metamorphic region, also along streams at several places in the Coal Measures, particularly in Bibb County around Blocton, in the upper (northeastern) part of Tuscaloosa County, and in Walker County near Cordova, Cedrom † and South Lowell. It is doubtless slowly retreating from the highlands, like several other species mentioned in this paper. To determine where it reached its maximum inland extension, and at what geological period, would be a most interesting problem, but I can suggest no way of solving it at present. The fact that at all the localities above mentioned, except those near Cordova and Cedrom, *Pinus palustris* is common on the neighboring hills, is perhaps worth remembering.

In the coastal plain *Quercus laurifolia* is common in most of the counties, but rather avoids the Cretaceous prairies and other calcareous regions where climax vegetation prevails. Dr. Mohr's remarks about this species and *Q. Phellos* on page 473 of his Plant Life show that he had the two species partly confused, for the latter is one of the commonest trees in the prairie region, where *Q. laurifolia* is almost unknown. The two trees are indeed difficult to distinguish in summer, but in winter and early spring (at which seasons most of my observations on Alabama trees were made) they are very distinct.

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* Some interesting suggestions along this line are found in Mr. Kearney's paper in Science for Nov. 30, 1900, though he seeks the cause of the phenomena in changes of climate, which must have played a relatively unimportant part, and moreover are largely hypothetical.

† A small station on the Frisco System, between Townley and Pocahontas.

PARONYCHIA RIPARIA Chapm.

SIPHONYCHIA PAUCIFLORA Small

These two species, new to the state, I found on sandy banks of rivers near Geneva the latter part of June.

MAGNOLIA GLAUCA L.

This tree has long been known to occur in the Metamorphic and Palaeozoic regions of Georgia and Alabama,* but it may be worth mentioning that I have recently found it still farther from the coast than it is usually seen. It grows on Sand Mountain in Marshall County near Albertville (some of the specimens there reaching a diameter of nine inches and a height of about fifty feet), on Lookout Mountain (a foot in diameter) as well as in the Coosa valley in Cherokee County, and in Blount County near Oneonta. The Sand and Lookout Mountain localities are between 900 and 1100 feet above sea-level. (Dr. Gattinger reports it from Madison County, Tennessee, which is still farther inland, but in the coastal plain.)

In the western part of the state, in the Tuscaloosa region of the coastal plain, this species is very common in the southern part of Marion County, up to latitude 34°, and the largest specimen I have ever seen, three feet in diameter, is in the western part of Fayette County, a little outside of the range given on Dr. Mohr's map.

The geological history of *Magnolia glauca* is probably similar to that of *Myrica carolinensis*, with which it often associates.

ILLICIUM FLORIDANUM Ellis

The range usually given for this species, "Florida to Louisiana," might lead uninformed persons to believe that it is found only near the coast. But in Alabama it has a pretty wide distribution, and is not even confined to the coastal plain. It seems to be most common in the region of the Tuscaloosa formation, in Marion, Lamar, Pickens, Tuscaloosa, Bibb, Chilton, Autauga, Elmore and Macon counties. In Chilton County it is also common along streams in the metamorphic region near the Coosa River; and it has recently been reported from Coosa County, on the other side of the river, by F. W. Reed.*

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* The northern boundary of its range in Alabama as known to Dr. Mohr is mapped on the frontispiece of his Plant Life.

Like several other southern evergreens now nearly confined to the coastal plain, this in all probability formerly grew in the mountains farther north, where there is no longer any trace of it. The fact that it has near relatives in eastern Asia is doubtless of some significance in this connection. Its habitat is difficult to describe, and not exactly like that of any other species known to me. It grows normally neither in swamps nor in hammocks, but just on the border line between them. A peculiarity of its range is that no one seems to have ever seen it in Georgia, though in Macon and Dale counties it is not very far from there, and Professor Earle reports it from Lee County, which is still nearer. Bartram's observations on this species (summarized in Mohr's Plant Life, pp. 14, 15) are worth reading.

HEPATICA ACUTILOBA DC.

Seen in March, in flower, on shaded Subcarboniferous bluffs in Marshall, Madison and Colbert counties. Near Riverton, in the last-named county, it grows within a mile or so of the Mississippi line, and it could doubtless be found on the Palaeozoic hills of that state also, though it does not seem to have been hitherto reported west of Georgia and south of Tennessee. Having found it near Riverton I naturally expected to find it also in the vicinity of Florence, a little farther up the Tennessee river; but strange to say, the *Hepatica* there seems to be all *triloba* (as I was told before I looked for it by Professor M. C. Wilson, a local botanist).

Judging from a remark in Gattinger's Tennessee Flora, and observations which have been made by other botanists, the exact relationship between these two supposed species of *Hepatica* deserves looking into, and might well be made the subject of statistical and experimental studies.

JEFFERSONIA DIPHYLLA (L.) Pers.

In rich woods on the limestone at the northern base of Sand Mountain, near the Tennessee River, a few miles east of Guntersville, Marshall County, March 22, 1906, in flower. Not previously reported south of Tennessee.

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* U. S. Forest Service Bull. **68**: 11, 47. 1906.

ARABIS GEORGIANA Harper, Torreya **3**: 88. 1903

Previously known only from the banks of the Oostanaula and Chattahoochee rivers in Georgia.* On December 9th last I was walking along the Coosa River (a continuation of the Oostanaula), in the upper edge of the coastal plain in Elmore County, a few miles below Wetumpka, and thinking that this species should grow there if anywhere in Alabama, I looked for it at the first promising spot — and found it, of course in the same condition in which I had last seen it in Georgia. On April 24 I revisited the locality and was fortunate in finding my plant in full bloom — the first time it had ever been seen in that condition in the wild state, by the way. Its habitat and associates there are very much the same as at the two Georgia stations.

PARNASSIA ASARIFOLIA Vent.

A few years ago I supposed that this species reached its southern limit in Clarke County, Georgia. † But Dr. Mohr ‡ has since reported it from Clay County, Alabama, and last spring I saw it in wet woods in the counties of Cleburne, Randolph and Chambers, which are likewise in the Metamorphic region.

NEVIUSIA ALABAMENSIS Gray

As is well known, this is one of the rarest of North American shrubs. It was known only from the vicinity of Tuscaloosa § until Mr. T. G. Harbison found it at the northwestern base of Sand Mountain in Jackson County a few years ago. || On March 23 I saw it on limestone rocks on the lower slopes of the mountains east of New Market, Madison County, about five miles from the Tennessee line, on the same formation (Subcarboniferous) as that on which Mr. Harbison found it.

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* See Torreya **4**: 24. 1904.

† Bull. Torrey Club **27**: 324, 335. 1900.

‡ Contr. U. S. Nat. Herb. **6**: 535. 1901.

§ See Plant World **3**: 136. 1900; **9**: 105. 1906.

|| Biltmore Bot. Stud. **1**: 155. 1902.

BAPTISIA BRACTEATA Muhl.

Seen in April and May on several dry rocky ridges in Cleburne, Calhoun and Talladega Counties, near the rather ill-defined boundary between Metamorphic and Palaeozoic. Associated in every case with *Pinus palustris* and other species of somewhat similar distributiion. Previously known only from eastern Middle Georgia.

POLYGALA NANA (Michx.) DC.

Since reporting this from DeKalb County* I have seen it in many other places in the upper parts of the state, particularly in Marshall, Etowah, Blount, Walker, Talladega and Chilton Counties. It occurs usually in dry woods, associated with *Pinus palustris* (except on Sand and Lookout Mountains, where this pine is not found), and grows scatteringly, rarely more than half a dozen specimens being visible at once. In Georgia, where it seems to be confined to the pine-barrens, I have not seen this species within fifty miles of the fall-line. Whether or not its irregular distribution follows approximately the same laws as that of *Myrica carolinensis* and other species mentioned above is an open question.

STAPHYLEA TRIFOLIA L.

Probably the only coastal plain stations on record for this species are in Quitman and Decatur counties, Georgia, along the Chattahoochee River.† But on April 23 I found many specimens along Catoma Creek in Montgomery County, some of them about three inches in diameter and twenty feet tall, which seems to be the maximum height recorded for this species, though not the maximum diameter.‡

CIRCAEA LUTETIANA L.

In rich woods along Chickasawbogue Creek on the road from Linden to Demopolis, Marengo County (Cretaceous region of the coastal plain), June 28. This station is of interest as being the first recorded in the coastal plain (at least in the South), as well as the southernmost by a good many miles.

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* Torreya **6** : 113, 115. 1906.

† See Bull. Torrey Club **32** : 162, 163. 1905.

‡ See Torreya **5** : 164. 1905.

? RHODODENDRON CUTHBERTII Small

At several places in the eastern (Metamorphic) part of Chilton County, on banks of streams, is a *Rhododendron* which a few years ago would have been pronounced without hesitation *R. punctatum* Andr.; but without flowers I have no way of distinguishing it from *R. Cuthbertii* Small,* a recently described species. Neither is mentioned in Mohr's Plant Life, but *R. punctatum* is reported from Tallapoosa County by Professor Earle† and from Eufaula by Dr. Chapman.‡ Professor Earle's plant is doubtless the same as mine and as one which grows among the Pine Mountains of western Middle Georgia, and Dr. Chapman's the same as one in the Eocene region of Southwest Georgia,§ but whether the two are identical or not cannot be determined at present.

PIERIS PHILLYREIFOLIA (Hook.) DC.

Dr. Mohr knew this only as a diminutive shrub in the pine-barrens of Mobile County; but last December I saw it in cypress ponds near Gordon and Cowarts, in Houston County, and around the lake near Florala, in Covington County, climbing the trees in the same unique manner that I noticed in Georgia a few years ago.||

ADELIA ACUMINATA Michx.

In view of the fact that this species, like many others of alluvial habitat, extends up the Mississippi valley embayment of the coastal plain to southern Illinois,¶ it is not surprising that it should occur along the Tennessee river near Florence, though that is a little out of the coastal plain. (The same remarks will apply to *Taxodium distichum*, *Planera aquatica* and *Brunnichia cirrhosa* as well.) When I saw it there, on the 29th of March, it was just beginning to flower. The specimens were quite numerous and mostly above

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* Torreya **2**: 9. 1902.

† Bull. Ala. Agric. Exp. Sta. 119: 97. 1902.

‡ Fl. So. U. S. ed. 3. 288. 1897.

§ See Bull. Torrey Club **33**: 240. 1906.

|| Torreya **3**: 21, 22. 1903.

¶ S. M. Coulter, Rep. Mo. Bot. Gard. **15**: 53, 54. *pl. 10.* 1904; H. A. Gleason, Torreya **6**: 8. 1906.

the average size, some being about 25 feet tall, with trunks 6 inches in diameter.

OSMANTHUS AMERICANUS (L.) B. & H.

In Alabama as well as in Georgia this evergreen shrub or small tree is by no means confined to the immediate vicinity of the coast, as was thought to be the case up to a few years ago.* It occurs at a number of places in the Eocene region, and extends inland to Chilton, Autauga and Elmore Counties, growing along streams in the metamorphic portion of the first-named, like *Illicium floridanum*. (It has also been found in Lee County.)† Like *Illicium* again, it has a number of Asiatic relatives, and may have had a similar history.

TRACHELOSPERMUM DIFFORME (Walt.) Gray

Still another coastal plain plant found occasionally in the upper districts. Dr. Mohr has already reported it from Morgan and Walker counties, and on May 13 I found it at two or three places along the Calvert Prong of the Locust Fork of the Warrior River in Blount County, on upper Carboniferous strata (Coal Measures). This too has Asiatic relatives, like the preceding.

In Georgia I have found this species almost always along streams which have passed through calcareous regions,‡ and this new Alabama station for it is no exception to the rule. For although the Calvert Prong runs lengthwise of Sand Mountain, occupying the synclinal trough of the plateau, like several other streams,§ it has some tributaries entering above the point in question which rise in the limestone valley on the southeast and flow into the mountain.|| This peculiar type of drainage I have not met with anywhere else than in Blount County.

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* See Bull. Torrey Club 30: 338. 1903.

† What is perhaps the first specimen of this species collected in the Metamorphic region was distributed by Professor and Mrs. Earle (*no. 56*), and is labeled "Occasional, usually along streams, often on rocky banks. Auburn, Lee Co., April 11, 1900."

‡ See Ann. N. Y. Acad. Sci. 17: 69, 70, 175. 1906.

§ See Torreya 6: 112, 114. 1906.

|| This is very well shown by the map of Blount County in the report of the field operations of the U. S. Bureau of Soils for 1905, taken in connection with the topographic maps of the same region, published by the U. S. Geological Survey.

CHRYSOPSIS OLIGANTHA Chapm.

In rather dry pine-barrens, Geneva and Covington counties. Nearly past flowering in the latter part of June, when I collected it, differing notably in this respect from the somewhat similar *C. graminifolia*, which flowers from August to November in Georgia.

ANTENNARIA SOLITARIA Rydb.

Like *Carex picta* and *Luzula saltuensis*, this is frequent on shaded non-calcareous bluffs in the upper half of the state. I have noted it in Lauderdale, Colbert, Franklin, Limestone, Marshall, Cherokee, Cleburne and Chilton counties. It is not mentioned by Chapman, Mohr, Harbison or Earle, which is strange, for it is a very distinct species, and can be easily recognized any day in the year.*

MESADENIA SULCATA (Fernald) Small

In and near branch-swamps in the pine-barrens, Geneva and Escambia counties. Previously known only from Southwest Georgia and West Florida,† and possibly also from South Carolina.‡

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* For notes on its occurrence in Georgia see Bull. Torrey Club **28** : 482. 1901 ; **30** : 294. 1903 ; **32** : 169. 1905.

† See Bull. Torrey Club **30** : 342. 1903 ; **31** : 27. 1904.

‡ See Torreya **5** : 183. 1905.